1490. ee. 49.

AN INVOCATION TO MELANCHOLY.

A FRAGMENT.

I have neither the Scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the Muſician's, which is fantaſtical; nor the Courtier's, which is proud; nor the Soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the Lawyer's, which is politick; nor the Lady's, which is nice, nor the Lover's, which is all theſe: But it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many ſimples, extracted from many objects, and, indeed, the ſundry contemplation of my travels, on which my often rumination wraps me in a moſt humorous ſadneſs.

As You Like It. SHAKESPEARE.

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M.DCC.LXXXV.

Invocation
A

AN
INVOCATION
TO
MELANCHOLY.

GODDESS of downcaſt eye! upon whoſe brow
Misfortune's hand ſeems dimly to have drawn
Her tints of pining hue — to Thee belong
The viſionary tribes of buſy thought
That crowd in nameleſs ſhapes the mental eye;
Ah! teach me, gentle Maid, with hermit ſtep
Thy haunts to find, and ever at thy ſhrine,
By fairy hands with mournful cypreſs hung,
To bend unſeen an humble Votary.

Loſt

Loſt in ſweet ſilent thought, at eventide
Thou wakeful lov'ſt to ſit by river dank,
In ſhade of glen remote, or boſom'd bow'r,
And ponder pleaſures paſt with fond regret,
Like wither'd flow'rs that once indeed were ſweet;
'Till rous'd by ſofteſt voice of village maid,
In ruſſet weeds bedight, with dainty hand
Who turns the ſnow-white wool on ſimple wheel,
Cheating ſlow Time with ruſtick madrigal
Of "Black-ey'd Suſan," or "Auld Robin Gray,"
Thou meet'ſt the fainteſt ſun-beam of the Eaſt
That gilds the heath-thyme and the broom-leaf wild;
E'er Shepherd's boy has left his lowly cot,
And heard the woodland Cuckow's matin note;
E'er Dian's Nymphs, who clad in April green,
Face the keen gale on Cynthus' beetled brow,
Have daſh'd the ſparkling dew with buſkin'd feet,
Or ſhook with mellow horn the diſtant dale.

When

When bleak December chills with icy hand
The drooping features of the ling'ring year,
And warns the 'wilder'd Wanderer of home,
I meet Thee liſt'ning to the hollow blaſt
With muſing ear, what time by Winter's fire
The ſocial family of boon Content
Their evening group with ſmiling faces form.

Yours is the luckleſs Youth whom hopeleſs Love
Has crown'd unſeemly with a willow wreath,
In ſad requital for his vows ſincere;
His laſt fond ſigh is yours, his longing look,
When loſt for aye he quits his own heart's Love,
And views her parting ſtep and waving hand:
Lead him, Indulgent Pow'r! to tangled glade
That mellow gleams beneath mild Evening's ſtar;
Or tall green foreſt huſh'd in deep repoſe,
With hamlets thin beſprent, and ruins grey,

That know no footſtep ſave the looby Hind's,
Where Talieſſin in fam'd days long paſt,
And many a Bard, whoſe tuneful hand is cold,
Call'd forth their fabling numbers, and awoke
The Lion ſouls of Cambria's warlike Sons;
Near Teivi's haunted ſtream, or Menai's flood,
Whoſe banks with wild embroid'ry Nature fring'd,
And left her ſhaggy outline, that diſdains
The tawdry finiſh of the Harlot Art.
Here lap his ſoul in bland forgetfulneſs,
Teach him in peace to wear the heavy hour,
And on the dimple of his faded cheek,
From which the roſe has long a truant been,
A few kind tears for Pity's ſake let fall.

As on he thunders 'midſt a ſhrinking world
With threat'ning gait and blood-ſtain'd ſword in hand,
With tacit ſigh, as ſacred as the tears

That parting Lovers o'er each other ſhed,
Thou view'ſt Ambition for a brittle crown
Cut his fell paſſage thro' the hearts of Kings;
His little day in clouds for ever ſet,
At laſt unknell'd Oblivion's prey he falls,
Left to the naked blaſt, and e'en deny'd
The cheap and nauſeous breath of rabble vile;
No lay unletter'd marks the ſpot remote
Where his mean aſhes with the common herd
Of clay-cold mortals find their laſt abode;
No face of Friend, in poignant ſorrow ſunk,
His name remembers or his turf protects.
If ſuch the rugged path that leads to Fame,
Each ſplendid hope and nobler aim forgot,
Oh, God! I'd rather be a looby Peaſant,
Eat my brown bread, and fatten in the ſun
On bench by highway ſide, or cottage door,
Than wait th' inſulting nod of abject Power;

Than dog and fawn with baſe humility,
To catch its pamper'd ear and Proteus ſmile.

With Thee o'er many a ſcatter'd wreck of Fate
Much may I love to caſt a penſive eye;
The Caſtle's ſhatter'd front of rough aſpèct,
High on the naked hill like Faulcon perch'd;
The moated Hall in lap of lonely dell,
From 'midſt embrowning trees obſcurely ſeen,
Oft may I mark with you, with you exclaim,
" In days of yore with old Magnificence
" Here dwelt the Baron bold or gallant Knight;
" Here in this hall their maſſy armour hung;
" Here at the gorgeous Tilt or Tournament
" Oft would the Bards awake th' enlivening ſtring
" Of airy harps to deeds of Chivalry;
" Struck by the magick of whoſe minſtrel chime
" The ſun-burnt Ploughman, as he hied him home,

" Would

" Would oft uplift his brow in mute amaze,
" And catch with raviſh'd ear the far-off ſound:
" Here oft the rafter'd roofs full blithly rung
" With tunes of Chevy Chace and Hardiknute;
" Nor wanting were there to inſpire the dance
" Kind blue-ey'd Maids full fair and peerleſs deem'd,
" Who lent their tempting looks and ſofteſt ſmiles."

Ah! let me rove with Thee at duſky eve
Some deſolated pile of Gothic mould,
Where Superſtition o'er the paly lamp
Long with ſunk eye her midnight veſpers ſung;
Where Time, who daily from his coalblack wing,
Still wider throws Oblivion's deepen'd ſhade,
Now on the mould'ring tomb in grim ſtate ſits,
And laughs at all the baſeleſs hopes of Man.—

Child of the potent ſpell and nimble eye,
Young Fancy oft in rainbow veſt array'd,
Points to new ſcenes that in ſucceſſion paſs
Acroſs the wond'rous mirrour that ſhe bears,
And bids thy' unfated ſoul and wand'ring eye,
A wider range o'er all her proſpects take:
Lo, at her call, New Zealand's waſtes ariſe,
Caſting their ſhadows far along the main,
Whoſe brows cloud-cap'd in joyleſs Majeſty
No human foot hath trod ſince Time began;
Here Death-like Silence ever brooding dwells,
Save when the watching Sailor ſtartled hears,
Far from his native land, at darkſome night,
The ſhril-ton'd Petrel, or the Penguin's voice,
That ſkim their trackleſs flight on lonely wing,
Thro' the bleak regions of the nameleſs main:
Here danger ſtalks, and drinks with glutted ear
The wearied Sailor's moan and fruitleſs ſigh,

Who,

Who, as he ſlowly cuts his daring way,
Affrighted drops his axe, and ſtops awhile
To hear the jarring echoes lengthen'd din
That fling from pathleſs cliffs their ſullen ſound:
Oft here the Fiend his griſly viſage ſhows,
His limbs of giant form in veſture clad
Of drear collected ice and ſtiffen'd ſnow,
The ſame he wore a thouſand years ago,
That thwarts the ſun-beam, and endures the day.

'Tis thus by Fancy ſhown Thou ken'ſt entranc'd
Lone tangled woods and ever ſtagnant lakes
That know no zephyr pure, or temp'rate gale,
By baleful Tigris' banks, where oft, they ſay,
As late in ſullen march for prey he prowls,
The tawny Lion ſees his ſhadow'd form,
At ſilent midnight, by the moon's pale gleam
On the broad ſurface of the dark deep wave:

Here

Here parch'd at mid-day, oft the Paſſenger
Invokes with ling'ring hope the tardy breeze;
And oft with ſilent anguiſh thinks in vain
On Europe's milder air and ſilver ſprings.

Thou unappall'd can'ſt view aſtounding Fear
With ghaſtly viſions wild, and train unbleſt
Of aſhy Fiends, at dead of murky night,
Who catch the fleeting ſoul, and ſlowly pace
With viſage dimly ſeen, and beck'ning hand;
Of ſhadowy Forms, that ever on the wing
Flit by the tedious couch of wan Deſpair:
Methinks I hear him with impatient tongue
The lagging minutes chide, whilſt ſad he ſits
And notes their ſecret lapſe with ſhaking head;
See, ſee with tearleſs glance they mark his fall,
And cloſe his beamleſs eye, who trembling meets
A late repentance, and an early grave.

With

With Thine and Elfin Fancy's dreams well pleas'd
Safe in the lowly vale of letter'd eaſe,
From all the dull Buffoonery of Life,
Thy ſacred influence grateful may I own;
Nor 'till Old Age ſhall lead me to my tomb
Quit Thee and all thy charms with many a tear.

On Omole or cold Soracte's top
Singing defiance to the threat'ning ſtorm,
Thus the lone Bird in Winter's rudeſt hour
Hid in ſome cavern, ſhrouds its ruffled plumes;
And thro' the long long night regardleſs hears
The wild wind's keeneſt blaſt and daſhing rain.—

THE END.